

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, DOT

§ 377.203

EDITORIAL NOTE: Nomenclature changes to part 377 appear at 66 FR 49871, Oct. 1, 2001.

Subpart A—Handling of C.O.D. Shipments

SOURCE: 32 FR 20050, Dec. 20, 1967, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 61 FR 54708, Oct. 21, 1996.

§ 377.101 Applicability.

The rules and regulations in this part apply to the transportation by motor vehicle of c.o.d. shipments by all common carriers of property subject to 49 U.S.C. 13702, except such transportation which is auxiliary to or supplemental of transportation by railroad and performed on railroad bills of lading, and except such transportation which is performed for freight forwarders and on freight forwarder bills of lading.

[32 FR 20050, Dec. 20, 1967. Redesignated at 61 FR 54708, Oct. 21, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 15424, Apr. 1, 1997]

§ 377.103 Tariff requirements.

No common carrier of property subject to the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 13702, except as otherwise provided in § 377.101, shall render any c.o.d. service unless such carrier has published, posted and filed tariffs which contain the rates, charges and rules governing such service, which rules shall conform to the regulations in this part.

[32 FR 20050, Dec. 20, 1967. Redesignated at 61 FR 54708, Oct. 21, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 15424, Apr. 1, 1997]

§ 377.105 Collection and remittance.

Every common carrier of property subject to 49 U.S.C. 13702, except as otherwise provided in § 377.101, which chooses to provide c.o.d. service may publish and maintain, or cause to be published and maintained for its account, a tariff or tariffs which set forth nondiscriminatory rules governing c.o.d. service and the collection and remittance of c.o.d. funds. Alternatively, any carrier that provides c.o.d. service, but does not wish to publish and maintain, or cause to be published and maintained, its own nondiscriminatory tariff, may adopt a rule requiring remittance of each c.o.d. collection di-

rectly to the consignor or other person designated by the consignor as payee within fifteen (15) days after delivery of the c.o.d. shipment to the consignee.

[52 FR 45966, Dec. 3, 1987, as amended at 62 FR 15424, Apr. 1, 1997]

Subpart B—Extension of Credit to Shippers by Motor Common Carriers, Water Common Carriers, and Household Goods Freight Forwarders

SOURCE: 50 FR 2290, Jan. 16, 1985, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 61 FR 54709, Oct. 21, 1996.

§ 377.201 Scope.

(a) *General.* These regulations apply to the extension of credit in the transportation of property under Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulation by motor carriers and household goods freight forwarders, except as otherwise provided.

(b) *Exceptions.* These regulations do not apply to—

- (1) Contract carriage operations.
- (2) Transportation for—
 - (i) The United States or any department, bureau, or agency thereof,
 - (ii) Any State, or political subdivision thereof,
 - (iii) The District of Columbia.
- (3) Property transportation incidental to passenger operations.

[50 FR 2290, Jan. 16, 1985, as amended at 51 FR 44297, Dec. 9, 1986; 62 FR 15424, Apr. 1, 1997]

§ 377.203 Extension of credit to shippers.

(a) *Authorization to extend credit.* (1) A carrier that meets the requirements in paragraph (a)(2) of this section may—

(i) Relinquish possession of freight in advance of the payment of the tariff charges, and

(ii) Extend credit in the amount of such charges to those who undertake to pay them (such persons are called *shippers* in this part).

(2) For such authorization, the carrier shall take reasonable actions to assure payment of the tariff charges within the credit periods specified—

- (i) In this part, or

(ii) In tariff provisions published pursuant to the regulations in paragraph (d) of this section.

(b) *When the credit period begins.* The credit period shall begin on the day following presentation of the freight bill.

(c) *Length of credit period.* Unless a different credit period has been established by tariff publication pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section, the credit period is 15 days. It includes Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays.

(d) *Carriers may establish different credit periods in tariff rules.* Carriers may publish tariff rules establishing credit periods different from those in paragraph (c) of this section. Such credit periods shall not be longer than 30 calendar days.

(e) *Service charges.* (1) Service charges shall not apply when credit is extended and payments are made within the standard credit period. The term *standard credit period*, as used in the preceding sentence, means—

(i) The credit period prescribed in paragraph (c) of this section, or

(ii) A substitute credit period published in a tariff rule pursuant to the authorization in paragraph (d) of this section.

(2) Carriers may, by tariff rule, extend credit for an additional time period, subject if they wish to a service charge for that additional time. The combined length of the carrier's standard credit period (as defined in paragraph (e)(1) of this section) and its additional credit period shall not exceed the 30-day maximum credit period prescribed in paragraph (d) of this section. When such a tariff rule is in effect, shippers may elect to postpone payment until the end of the extended credit period if, in consideration thereof, they include any published service charges when making their payment.

(3) Carriers may, by tariff rule, establish service charges for payments made after the expiration of an authorized credit period. Such a rule shall—

(i) Institute such charges on the day following the last day of an authorized credit period, and

(ii) Notify shippers—

(A) That its only purpose is to prevent a shipper who does not pay on time from having free use of funds due to the carrier,

(B) That it does not sanction payment delays, and

(C) That failure to pay within the authorized credit period will, despite this provision for such charges, continue to require the carrier, before again extending credit, to determine in good faith whether the shipper will comply with the credit regulations in the future.

(4) Tariff rules that establish charges pursuant to paragraph (e) (2) or (3) of this section may establish minimum charges.

(f) *Discounts.* Carriers may, by tariff rule, authorize discounts for early freight bill payments when credit is extended.

(g)(1) *Collection expense charges.* Carriers may, by tariff rule, assess reasonable and certain liquidated damages for all costs incurred in the collection of overdue freight charges. Carriers may use one of two methods in their tariffs:

(i) The first method is to assess liquidated damages as a separate additional charge to the unpaid freight bill. In doing so, the tariff rule shall disclose the exact amount of the charges by stating either a dollar or specified percentage amount (or a combination of both) of the unpaid freight bill. The tariff shall further specify the time period (which shall at least allow for the authorized credit period) within which the shipper must pay to avoid such liquidated damages.

(ii) The second method is to require payment of the full, nondiscounted rate instead of the discounted rate otherwise applicable. The difference between the discount and the full rate constitutes a carrier's liquidated damages for its collection effort. Under this method the tariff shall identify the discount rates that are subject to the condition precedent and which require the shipper to make payment by a date certain. The date certain may not be set to occur by the carrier until at least after the expiration of the carrier's authorized credit period.

(2) The damages, the timing of their applicability, and the conditions, if any, as provided by the tariff-rule methods allowed under paragraphs (g)(1) (i) and (ii) of this section also:

(i) Shall be clearly described in the tariff rule;

(ii) Shall be applied without unlawful prejudice and/or unjust discrimination between similarly situated shippers and/or consignees;

(iii) Shall be applied only to the non-payment of original, separate and independent freight bills and shall not apply to aggregate *balance-due* claims sought for collection on past shipments by a bankruptcy trustee, or any other person or agent;

(iv) Shall not apply to instances of clear clerical or ministerial error such as non-receipt of a carrier's freight bill, or shipper's payment check lost in the mail, or carrier mailing of the freight bill to the wrong address;

(v) Shall not apply in any way to a charge for a transportation service if the carrier's bill of lading independently provides that the shipper is liable for fees incurred by the carrier in the collection of freight charges on that same transportation service;

(vi) shall be applied only after the authorized credit period, and when the carrier has issued a revised freight bill or notice of imposition of collection expense charges for late payment within 90 days after expiration of the authorized credit period.

(3) As an alternative to the tariff-rule methods allowed under paragraphs (g)(1) (i) and (ii) of this section, a carrier may, wholly outside of its tariff, assess collection charges though contract terms in a bill of lading. By using the carrier and its bill of lading, the shipper accepts the bill of lading terms.

(h) *Discrimination prohibited.* Tariff rules published pursuant to paragraphs (d), (e), and (f) of this section shall not result in unreasonable discrimination among shippers.

[50 FR 2290, Jan 16, 1985, as amended at 53 FR 6991, Mar. 4, 1988; 54 FR 30748, July 24, 1989]

§ 377.205 Presentation of freight bills.

(a) *"To be prepaid" shipments.* (1) On "to be prepaid" shipments, the carrier shall present its freight bill for all transportation charges within the time period prescribed in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, except—

(i) As noted in paragraph (d) of this section, or

(ii) As otherwise excepted in this part.

(2) The time period for a carrier to present its freight bill for all transportation charges shall be 7 days, measured from the date the carrier received the shipment. This time period does not include Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays.

(b) *"Collect" shipments.* (1) On "collect" shipments, the carrier shall present its freight bill for all transportation charges within the time period prescribed in paragraph (b)(2) and of this section, except—

(i) As noted in paragraph (d) of this section, or

(ii) As otherwise excepted in this part.

(2) The time period for a carrier to present its freight bill for all transportation charges shall be 7 days, measured from the date the shipment was delivered at its destination. This time period does not include Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays.

(c) *Bills or accompanying written notices shall state penalties for late payment, credit time limits and service charge and/or collection expense charge and discount terms.* When credit is extended, freight bills or a separate written notice accompanying a freight bill or a group of freight bills presented at one time shall state that "failure timely to pay freight charges may be subject to tariff penalties" (or a statement of similar import). The bills or other notice shall also state the time by which payment must be made and any applicable service charge and/or collection expense charge and discount terms.

(d) *When the carrier lacks sufficient information to compute tariff charges.* (1) When information sufficient to enable the carrier to compute the tariff charges is not then available to the carrier at its billing point, the carrier shall present its freight bill for payment within 7 days following the day upon which sufficient information becomes available at the billing point. This time period does not include Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays.

(2) A carrier shall not extend further credit to any shipper which fails to furnish sufficient information to allow the carrier to render a freight bill within a reasonable time after the shipment is tendered to the origin carrier.